



Cole, T. (2018). Following The Rough Guide to Góra Kalwaria: constructing memory tourism of absence in guidebooks to post-communist Poland . *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 11(3), 255-268. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17526272.2018.1490074>

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):
[10.1080/17526272.2018.1490074](https://doi.org/10.1080/17526272.2018.1490074)

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)
PDF-document

This is the author accepted manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Taylor & Francis at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17526272.2018.1490074>. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

University of Bristol - Explore Bristol Research

General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/ebr-terms/>

Following *The Rough Guide* to Góra Kalwaria: Constructing memory tourism of absence in post-communist Poland

This article uses comparative analysis of the editions of *The Rough Guide* to Poland published in the 1990s to argue that a memory tourism of absence was being offered to western visitors. This differed from existing categories of tourism – dark tourism, Holocaust tourism, Jewish heritage tourism – by directing visitors to see the places where Jews lived before the Holocaust, and where their memory was in danger of being erased in both the communist and post-communist era. In this context, western visitors were not only directed to sites to witness absence, but also to engage in acts of memory tourism that were charged with a sense of moral purpose. A concern with absence was more widely shared in the decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall, and this memory tourism of absence is one that – like all acts of tourism – can and needs to be historicised.

Keywords: memory tourism; post-communist Eastern Europe; Poland; Jewish heritage; *The Rough Guide*; guidebooks; absence

Sites of absence were – ironically perhaps – part of the ‘tourist gaze’ in post-communist eastern and central Europe in the 1990s (Urry, 1990). A common destination for visitors were the new gaps in the landscapes of post-communist cities where the statues of former heroes had been removed in the autumn and winter of 1989 (Pittaway, 2003). Nowhere was this interest in sites of absence more important than in Berlin, where, as Joachim Schlör (2006: 87) pointedly notes, it was only once it had largely been demolished that the Berlin wall became iconic ‘and the site of the wall had become a sight (of something one could not see anymore).’ In this context of the importance of the recently invisible, guidebooks played a key role in alerting the tourist to where they could ‘see’ these gaps in the post-communist landscape and what these absences meant (MacCannell, 1976).

One example of this can be found in the pages of one of the guidebooks – the various editions of *The Rough Guide* to Poland published in the 1990s – that are the focus of this article. In the second edition published in 1993, visitors were introduced in the opening paragraph describing the museum in the former main camp of Auschwitz, to what ‘you won’t find here any longer.’ The specific absences that the authors drew visitors’ attention to were the recently removed ‘memorial stone and succession of plaques placed in front of and around the camp by the postwar communist authorities claiming that 4 million people died in a place officially described as an “International Monument to Victims of Fascism”’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 346). What is particularly striking is that it was only when this memorial disappeared that it was made visible in and by the guidebook. There was no specific mention of the memorial when it was still present at the time of the authors’ research for the first edition, although its text cast a shadow over the pages of the guidebook, informing the wider framing of the site. In the first edition, the authors had drawn on these plaques that they had clearly seen in giving the figure of ‘four million’ victims in introducing the horror of Auschwitz to visitors (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: 213). In what is a common practice of factual updating from first to second edition, two years later they introduced readers to the ‘dispute’ over the precise number of victims at Auschwitz, and informed them that, while ‘the exact figure will never be known, in reputable historical circles it’s now generally believed that somewhere between 1.5 and 2 million people died in the camp, the vast majority (85–90 percent) of whom were Jews...’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 345).

This updating is common to guidebooks that run through multiple editions and was something flagged as particularly necessary in the post-communist context where, as was acknowledged in the first edition, ‘things are changing at an extraordinary speed

in Poland, with new businesses cropping up daily and prices in a continual state of flux' (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: iv). But, as the authors were well aware, there was more going on in post-communist Poland than simply the first years of western capitalism. As they signalled in drawing attention to a memorial once it was gone, Auschwitz had recently undergone 'a symbolic intellectual cleanup' when 'both the inflated numerical estimates and the lack of references to the central place of Jews in the genocide carried out in Auschwitz-Birkenau were removed in 1990' (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 346). As was common across the former communist countries in eastern and central Europe, the history of recent absences was introduced to those visiting landscapes in flux: places that, for example, had recently been re-named, as *The Rough Guide* made clear in its titling of 'The (Ex-) Lenin Shipyards' in Gdansk (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: 91).

But this article seeks to do more than offer examples of this touristic interest in new gaps in the rapidly changing post-communist landscapes of eastern and central Europe in the 1990s. Rather, through a close and comparative reading of the editions of *The Rough Guide* against other guidebooks to Poland published in the 1990s, it points to the ways that *The Rough Guide* sought to make visible both a longer and broader history of absences. Most significantly these included post-Holocaust Jewish absences, but they also stretched to communist memory absences which were seen as persisting into the post-communist present. It did this by directing visitors to places where Jews had lived, and not only where they had died (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: ix). And in some cases, this meant that it sent travellers to Poland to rather unusual destinations.

In the third edition, published in 1996, the authors of *The Rough Guide* to Poland offered a new pair of attractions to independent travellers staying in Warsaw who were keen to venture out of the Polish capital. *Rough Guide* readers were encouraged to head just over thirty kilometres south to visit the town of Góra Kalwaria

and the neighbouring medieval castle in the village of Czersk. The latter offered the chance to explore ‘splendid ruins’ and so its inclusion in the ever-expanding range of tourist destinations in this recently post-communist country made sense. However, directing tourists to Góra Kalwaria was, as the guidebook authors themselves acknowledged, a far more unusual choice because this was a town ‘with a forlorn end-of-the-world feel to it, and on first impressions little to recommend the place’ and somewhere where ‘there really isn’t a lot to see now’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 141–145). Given such a description, it is perhaps not that surprising that *The Rough Guide* was on its own when it came to sending day trippers visiting Warsaw to Góra Kalwaria. This seemingly unprepossessing town was missing from all other tourist guidebooks to Poland published in the 1990s, including the most direct market competitor published by *Lonely Planet* (Dydzinski, 1993). Its presence in *The Rough Guide* was less because of what could be seen there now, which was very little, than what had once been here in a town that was once the home of an important Hasidic community (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 144). Góra Kalwaria was included in the guidebook because it was a place to see and experience absence.

As the example of Góra Kalwaria suggests, there was more going on in post-1989 tourism in Poland than the current categories developed in the literature suggest. Important literatures have sought to identify and explain the growth of a new kind of post-modern tourism that focuses on sites of mass death (Lennon and Foley, 2000; Sharpley, 2005), but places like Góra Kalwaria do not fit neatly within such explanations. These were not explicitly sites of what has been dubbed Holocaust tourism, which has generated its own literature of explanation and critique (Pollock, 2003; Beech, 2010; Cole, 2013a; 2015; Reynolds, 2018). One thing that these places did share with the destinations central to Holocaust tourism was a focus on Jewish absence.

The absence of the murdered victims is core to experiences of, and representations of, these now empty sites (Baer, 2000; Cole, 2015). But absence played out in different ways in tourist encounters with these places, as I seek to explain in this article that shifts our gaze from the more well-trodden terrain of post-1989 visits to former camps (Cole, 2013b).

The centrality of absence also distinguishes this article, with its focus on tourist practices in the immediate post-1989 years, from a literature that has pointed to the emergence and flourishing of a new ‘virtually Jewish’ culture in Poland, in particular focused around the former Jewish quarter of Kazimierz in Krakow (Gruber, 2002; Lehrer, 2013). Although begun during the Communist period as an act of political opposition, this renaissance reached its apogee in the late 1990s and 2000s (Lehrer, 2010: 270–271). However, my focus here is on the decade before this renaissance when there was still relatively little to see in places like Góra Kalwaria, and yet despite – or precisely because of – these absences, tourists were sent there. These were not the only western visitors to former Jewish quarters in Poland in the 1990s, as the literature on the growth of Jewish roots tourism – or pilgrimage – that took in former homes and synagogues and not only former ghettos and camps has shown (Kugelmass, 1993; 1994). However, mainstream, mass-market guidebooks such as *The Rough Guide* were not directed at such a niche travel constituency. Rather, they were aimed at a wide readership of young independent travellers who were heading east in the 1990s.

Through a close and comparative reading of these guidebooks published in Britain in the 1990s (Salter and McLachlan, 1991; 1993; 1996; 1999), I suggest that more was going on in Poland in the decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall than the current literatures on Holocaust and Jewish tourism have identified, with their focus on a slightly later period. In particular, I point to the ways that these guidebooks

constructed practices at the intersections of memory and tourism – or memory through tourism – for visitors to Poland, with a clear eye to the politics of memory at play (Buzinde, 2010). They did this by developing what I dub a discourse of memory tourism of absence that played out in complex ways across the pages of the guidebook. Broadly speaking, *The Rough Guide* worked with, and evoked, three chronologies as it directed western European backpackers to explore Polish villages, towns and cities that once had sizeable pre-war Jewish populations. Firstly, the guidebooks evoked the pre-Holocaust Jewish past as an absent presence. Secondly, the guidebooks invited the visitor to witness the more recent communist era past and specifically the absence – and suppression – of memory of Polish Jews. Thirdly, the guidebooks brought the visitor into the post-communist era present of their own visit and pointed to the persistence of absences of memory in contemporary Poland. Uniquely among other contemporaneous guidebooks to Poland published in the 1990s, *The Rough Guide* constructed a series of pasts and presents through a tourism focused on an almost archaeological uncovering of multiple layers of Jewish absence.

As well as suggesting the need to expand our categories beyond ideas of dark tourism, Holocaust tourism or Jewish roots tourism, this article seeks to make two broader contributions to the literature on tourism. Firstly, it calls for the need to historicise tourist practices, using a case study of the decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Here, the article is very much conceived as primarily a history that seeks to uncover a narrative constructed across the editions of one set of guidebooks – an approach that remains surprisingly lacking in studies of tourism (Towner, 1996; Koshar, 1998). Rather than being a-historical categories, particular tourisms have beginnings and ends, and are very much themselves historical. As I explore below, *The Rough Guide* began directing western visitors to Góra Kalwaria at a particular moment in time,

and then stopped sending them there a decade later. Secondly, the article seeks to bring *The Rough Guides* to the attention of broader tourism studies. Guidebooks play a critical role as mediator between visitors and the places they visit (Bhattacharyya, 1997; Caruana *et al.*, 2008; Peel and Sørensen, 2016). However, despite their importance within tourist practices, they have been relatively understudied. Certainly, there are few detailed studies of guidebooks in the literature on dark tourism or Holocaust tourism (Siegenthaler, 2002; Cole, 2013a). But there are also surprisingly few studies of the discourses constructed in guidebooks given their centrality to global tourism (Bhattacharyya, 1997; McGregor, 2000; Zillinger, 2006; Kraft, 2007; Lisle, 2008; Buzinde, 2010; Nelson, 2010; Tegelberg, 2010). Moreover, where scholars have examined guidebooks the focus has been almost wholly on the market-leading *Lonely Planet* guidebook series.

This article seeks to draw together an understudied guidebook series – *The Rough Guide* – and the historical specificity of a particular time – the 1990s and place – post-communist Poland, to point to the ways that a short-lived category of memory tourism of absence was constructed through the pages of a number of editions of this guidebook. I argue that these guides framed a particular encounter with the Polish landscape that encouraged an uncovering, experiencing and an attempt to rectify a series of historical and contemporary absences through inserting the tourist body armed with their guide book, into a series of landscapes that included surprising places like Góra Kalwaria. Of course, one criticism that can be directed at a focus on guidebook content is that it remains at the level of discourses of tourism, rather than on the daily practices of tourists on the ground (Therkelsen and Sørensen, 2005). It is, after all, one thing to say that *The Rough Guide* started encouraging visitors to Warsaw to make their way to Góra Kalwaria and another thing altogether to say whether their readership chose to

follow their guidebook's advice and if so, how they made sense of what they saw. Such analysis is beyond the scope of this article but would be a valuable addition to the literature.

Evoking absent presence

The coverage of Góra Kalwaria in the pages of *The Rough Guide* offers a particularly striking example of the ways that the authors sought to evoke pre-war Jewish life for contemporary western visitors. As they made clear, Góra Kalwaria was to be visited not because of what was there in the present, but rather because of what had been there in the past and was either no longer visible, or submerged and hidden, in the present. In order to rectify this absence, the guidebook did two things. Firstly, it offered a thorough grounding in the history of this former 'legendary Hassidic centre' so as to evoke the Jewish past of Góra Kalwaria in the general. Alongside contextual information about the town's pre-war significance in Polish Jewish history, readers were offered a two-page extract from an earlier tourist account penned by a German visitor – another fellow tourist – to the town in the 1920s, which served to re-people the space as a busy site of religious pilgrimage in the decades prior to the Holocaust. Secondly, it directed its readers to uncover the traces of this past in the buildings of the town. Although the extant structures of 'both the Ger Synagogue and many of the buildings of the Hasidic court are still here today,' visitors were told, 'you certainly won't find any signs informing you where to look', hence the importance of *The Rough Guide* in revealing this hidden past. It sent visitors to the 'furniture workshop' at the rear of the courtyard accessed from ul. Pijarska 10, where they would find the few remaining traces of the building's past use as a synagogue (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 142–144). As the

authors promised, the combination of historical knowledge and on-the-ground orientation meant that day trippers from Warsaw had everything they needed for ‘a visit to Góra [to] become...both a fascinating, though in many ways also depressing, experience’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 144).

The Ger Synagogue in Góra Kalwaria was not the only hidden synagogue that *The Rough Guide* helped visitors to Poland to discover. In a small number of cases these were synagogues that were undergoing, or had recently undergone, renovation. The guidebook followed other guidebooks in directing visitors to the relatively well-known and ‘best preserved’ or ‘best restored synagogue in Poland’, found in Tykocin (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: 135; Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 224; Dydyński, 1993: 165), but was on its own in ‘discovering’ in Włodaw, the presence of ‘one of the best preserved synagogues in the country’ which earned the town ‘its as yet underdeveloped tourist stars’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 293) However, in most cases, the synagogues that *The Rough Guide* sent its readers to were not particularly visible. Visitors to Przemyśl were informed of the whereabouts of the three former synagogues in this town – at numbers 33 and 45 ul. Jagiellońska and ‘across the river – off to the left from ul. 3 Maja, now part of a garage workshop’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 277). These were mapped out onto the town map, marked as ‘synagogue’ in the first edition, and ‘former synagogue’ in later editions (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: 161, Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 276). In Nowy Sącz, readers of *The Rough Guide* were let in on the secret that the contemporary art gallery north of the Rynek was in fact a seventeenth century synagogue that had been ‘so well modernised that there’s nothing visibly Jewish left’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 298). Not only were readers informed of its previous existence, but the place itself was marked in bold within the guide as a site to visit as synagogue rather than art gallery.

This sense of discovery fits with the style of guidebooks like *The Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet* which are oriented towards offering the independent traveller a (heavily mediated) sense of adventure rather than a pre-packaged tourist experience (Tegelberg, 2010). However, *The Rough Guide* was distinctive in its framing of these hidden synagogues. For example, while the *Lonely Planet* directed visitors to Reszow to the same building, it offered it as somewhere to visit ‘if you still have time to spare’ to catch a changing exhibition (Dydynski, 1993: 285). *Lonely Planet* presented the building as a site to be visited for its present use – as it did elsewhere, directing visitors to the ‘New Town synagogue’ in Reszow rather than the other former synagogue because it ‘has more to offer as it holds the BWA Art Gallery, worth seeing’ – whereas *The Rough Guide* directed tourists to see its past (Dydynski, 1993: 259–260).

The absent Jewish past found in specific mapped buildings that were now art gallery, garage or furniture workshop, was something that *The Rough Guide* authors sought to evoke more generally on the streets of Polish towns and cities. Góra Kalwaria was, in short, a microcosm of Poland as a whole, which was painted in the pages of the guidebook as haunted by Jewish absence. Warsaw was described as a city ‘marred by a silence’ – ‘the silence left by the exterminated Jewish community,’ south-eastern Poland was filled with towns where ‘the absence of the Jews casts a pall,’ while in Kazimierz – the former Jewish quarter in Krakow – ‘you feel the weight of an absent culture’ in a place where ‘the soul of the town you feel, died in the death camps’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 56, 232, 253). Narrated this way, Poland in general, and specifically Polish towns, were offered up to visitors in the 1990s as places where Jewish absence was palpable on streets where ‘you feel the weight of an absent culture’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 392).

Critiquing absent memory

But as *The Rough Guides* made clear, it was not simply the case that Jews had been murdered during the Nazi occupation and Jewish culture destroyed, but both had subsequently been forgotten during the communist era. The result was that acknowledgement, let alone memorialization, of former Jewish sites was painted as the exception rather than the norm in Poland. The ‘simple statue’ of Janusz Korczak – well known as an innovative educator who accompanied the children in his care during the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka death camp – outside his former orphanage was a site where, the authors editorialized, ‘here at least, the city’s Jewish past has been done justice’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 90). However, the bigger picture they painted was of a country where traces of Jewish history were seen to have been hidden or marginalized. In Bialystok, there was a memorial to the Ghetto Uprising, but the authors noted that it is ‘seemingly in the middle of nowhere’ and ‘as with many Jewish war monuments in Poland, it’s easy to miss – there’s no sign and the place isn’t even named on the city map’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 217–218). In Lublin, the former Yeshiva still stands, but ‘to any but the trained eye there’s precious little evidence of the building’s former use, a simple plaque on the outside wall briefly stating the historical facts’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 244).

In directing its readers to discover the material traces of Poland’s Jewish past, *The Rough Guide* told a post-war story of the recycling and neglecting of these structures. Synagogues had been turned into cultural centres, art galleries, libraries, the town’s register office, a bank and later a ‘seedy bar’, or had simply been abandoned (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 188, 257, 283; Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 292, 390, 437; Bousfield and Salter, 2005: 307). Describing the former synagogue building in

Checiny, visitors were told that, 'Like many former synagogues this is now a cultural centre, but as with all too many other former Jewish places of worship, a few decorative features apart there's been too little attempt to preserve anything of the original features of the building here, the main prayer hall now functioning as a weekend disco complete with glittering lights illuminating the empty frame of the *Aron Ha Kodesh*' (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 441). Here the suggestion was not simply a story of post-war neglect but desecration.

This picture extended to Jewish cemeteries that had been left to 'rot,' 'crumble' and be reclaimed by nature (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 204, 216, 229, 262; Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 441). This rendering contrasted with the occasional references to Jewish cemeteries in the *Lonely Planet* guidebooks published in the 1990s, which offered overgrown cemeteries as romantic ruins: Compare *Lonely Planet*'s description of the cemetery at Lesko: 'Several hundred gravestones are scattered amidst tall trees and high grass...left in total isolation, in different stages of decay, they're a very impressive sight' (Dydzinski, 1993: 271) with *The Rough Guide*'s rendering of Bialystok, where 'Perhaps the saddest reminder of the city's onetime Jewish population is the Jewish cemetery, off ul. Wschodnia on the northeast edge of the city.... With Catholic cemeteries on both sides, an Orthodox church under construction at the back, and children playing along the walls, the large and badly neglected cemetery looks and feels like a beleaguered place. The few remaining gravestones are scattered around in the undergrowth, some of them still legible, but if things carry on this way there may not be any left in the not-too-distant future' (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 219). What visitors discovered at an individual overgrown cemetery was offered, not as exception, but reflective of a broader Polish treatment of the material culture of the Jewish past across the country (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 229). In Tykocin, *The Rough Guide*

editorialized that, ‘the Jewish cemetery on the edge of town is gradually blending into the surrounding meadow – as so often, there’s no-one able or willing to take care of it’ (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 262). Neglect and erasure of former Jewish sites was offered up as the norm. Moreover, this was not seen as simply a history of communist-era neglect, but something that persisted into the post-communist present.

Rectifying absent memory

Framing their expectations of former Jewish sites in Poland through stories of neglect was more than simply offering independent travellers the sensation of discovery that characterises guidebooks like *The Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet*. In part, this guide sought to direct western backpackers to hidden Jewish gems. But it also injected a sense of moral purpose into these acts of discovery of traces of Jewishness that had been destroyed during the Second World War and – as elsewhere in communist Europe – marginalised or submerged during the Cold War (Young, 1993). Sending people to places like Góra Kalwaria was nothing less than engaging in an act of incomplete post-Communism revision. This was not a quest without difficulties, with the difficulties making this all the more pressing and important. A clear example comes through in the language used to describe visiting ‘the one proud squat brick synagogue’ in Góra Kalwaria that ‘is now a dilapidated furniture workshop tucked away at the back of a filthy courtyard’. ‘If the less than friendly contingent of local dogs let you stay long enough,’ visitors were warned, ‘you’ll be able to make out the frame of a Star of David up in one of the windows and a small commemorative tablet on the wall. If you’re brave enough to persevere, the caretaker of the adjoining building, formerly part of the Hasidic court complex, may let you in to have a look around, though there really isn’t a

lot to see now. Wandering through the dusty courtyards of the surrounding streets under the inquiring gaze of local residents, it requires an effort of the imagination to picture what things must have been like here when Hassidim filled the streets and houses' (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 144).

Such a rendering fits with the house style of guidebooks oriented at the independent traveller that construct the destination as one that is hard to access and potentially dangerous, and so foreground the importance of the guidebook as the mediating tool, but also – and most significantly – reify the guidebook-using traveller as someone who is a risk-taking adventurer in search of authentic experience (Bhattacharyya, 1997). In the context of the long-standing distinctions drawn between tourists and travellers, it is clearly those who imagine their identity to be travellers who guides like *Lonely Planet* and *The Rough Guide* are appealing to (MacCannell, 1976; Bhattacharyya, 1997; Caruana *et al.*, 2008). Guidebooks like the *Lonely Planet* and *The Rough Guide* adopt a conversational style and reject any semblance of detached neutrality (Lisle, 2008: 161). Both are guides that freely offer opinion and not simply information. This distinctive house style in *The Rough Guide* can be seen clearly in a comparison of the description of the same place in a more specialised guidebook to Jewish sites in Poland published in 2001. This also oriented visitors to the former synagogue in Góra Kalwaria, but with a markedly different tone: 'Still standing is Gerer Rebbe's synagogue at Pijarska, once the seat of a famous Hassidic dynasty of the Alter family, though it now serves as a warehouse and barn. The only remnant of the building's Jewish history is the metal framework of a Magen David. What was once the residence of the Gerer Rebbe and the adjacent yeshiva have been converted into tenements' (Kagan, 2001: 61). It is a description stripped of adjectives and without threatening dogs, a disinterested caretaker and suspicious locals. In contrast, *The Rough*

Guide painted a picture of the visitor in search of the neglected Jewish past facing the disinterest and hostility of the contemporary local population.

Guidebooks play a critical role in mediating the relationship between the visitor and both the country visited, *and* its native population (Bhattacharyya, 1997: 372). As *The Rough Guide* directed visitors to uncover Jewish absences and absences of memory in places like Góra Kalwaria, it did so with at least half an eye on the attitudes of the surrounding contemporary Polish population to these sites of Jewish absence. In setting up the western visitor against the local population with very different attitudes over the significance of these former Jewish sites, these guidebooks shared a broader tendency to perpetuate neo-colonial attitudes that direct western visitors to sites seen to be of no value to the local population (Lozanski, 2010). But in doing this it not only shared a tendency across this genre of guidebooks that take self-consciously set out to take travellers off the beaten track, but also meshed with broader tendencies in Jewish pilgrimage tourism to Poland to identify hostility in the local population (Lehrer, 2013).

The assumptions behind the authorial position of local disinterest and hostility came through in a two-page side-bar on 'Poles, Jews and the Concentration Camps' that highlighted the problematic nature of Polish-Jewish relations both pre- *and* post-1989. In part, this side-bar provided visitors to Auschwitz with a contextualising history of the tendency by the communist authorities to downplay the Jewishness of the prisoner population at Auschwitz: something that had changed in post-Communist Poland where 'there is greater sensitivity to Jewish victims'. However, western visitors were warned that in some ways things had not changed much post-1989. Readers were informed that 'the broader issue of anti-Semitism in Poland – both historical and current – remains' and that recent incidents 'hint at a nasty undercurrent to Polish politics, and it's unnerving that anti-Semitism should remain a useful political tool in a country where

virtually no Jews remain' (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: 214–215; Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 348–349). That such a viewpoint was controversial was partially acknowledged by the highly unusual addition of a by-line to the former journalist Mark Salter in the second edition – the only one in this joint-authored guide – as well as by the short-lived nature of much of the text in this particular side-bar (Lisle, 2008). Accusations of persisting Polish antisemitism did not survive the reissuing of the third edition of the guide, which more positively celebrated the inclusive nature of the commemorations on the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz held in 1995 as something that 'perhaps provides a model for future approaches to the often difficult and emotionally charged issue of Polish-Jewish relations' (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 421).

During the early 1990s, *The Rough Guide* not only highlighted the perceived injustices done to Jewish memory during the communist period that were also seen as continuing into post-communist Poland, but it also sought to achieve a *post facto* justice by reinserting the Jewish past into the contemporary tourist itinerary and ensuring that western visitors to Poland did not just stumble across traces of the Jewish past, but went in search of these faint and covered over traces despite the problems posed by the dogs at Góra Kalwaria, the 'locked' gates in Lodz and the 'moody old caretaker' and the 'menacing-looking guard dog' in Lublin (Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 120, 241–243). The problems posed in visiting this hidden and desecrated past made it all the more important to persevere. It was not only visiting the former concentration and death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau that was imbued with a sense of moral purpose. This sense of moral purpose extended also to former synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, where the act of visiting the overgrown cemetery on the outskirts of Lesko was described in the language of encountering 'a powerful testimony to centuries of rural Jewish presence'

(Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 282). In short, visiting former synagogues and cemeteries in places like Góra Kalwaria was framed as an act of post-1989 memory tourism that focused on landscapes of absence.

Historicising memory tourism of absence

But Góra Kalwaria's inclusion into *The Rough Guide's* tourist itinerary did not last all that long. While deemed important enough to warrant four pages of text in the mid-1990s – the page count of a destination of mid importance – Góra Kalwaria disappeared entirely less than a decade later. This town which was literally put on the tourist map in *The Rough Guide's* introduction of the Warsaw and Mazovia region that opened the third edition, was absent from that same map in the sixth edition (Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 62–63; Bousfield and Salter, 2005: 80–81). The appearance and then disappearance of Góra Kalwaria from the guidebook is mirrored in the story of another place close to Warsaw: the former Nazi death camp of Treblinka where Warsaw's Jewish community were deported and murdered in the summer and autumn of 1942. When Góra Kalwaria first made its way on to the map and into the guidebook in 1996, Treblinka was noticeable by its absence as a tourist destination. However, by the time of the sixth edition when Góra Kalwaria was removed from the map, Treblinka was mapped out for visitors orienting themselves with the region around Warsaw and was now also featured as a site to be visited by those spending time in the Polish capital (Bousfield and Salter, 2005: 162–163).

One thing that longitudinal study of guidebooks across editions allows for is not only study of changing descriptions of places, but also evidence of shifts in the tourist economy. A clear example of this found in the pages of guidebooks to Poland from the

1990s and into the 2000s and beyond, is the growing importance, broadening and acceptance of Holocaust tourism. It was not simply that the guidebooks offered more information on a site like Auschwitz Birkenau, but also normalised the act of Holocaust tourism from initial disquiet at the presence of a ‘large cafeteria inside the Auschwitz camp’ being grotesque (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: 214; Salter and McLachlan, 1993: 346; Salter and McLachlan, 1996: 419) turning to matter-of-fact reporting of the presence of this facility (Bousfield and Salter, 2005: 448). Moreover, as the inclusion of Treblinka shows, *The Rough Guide* expanded the range of Holocaust tourist sites from the former camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek (Salter and McLachlan, 1991: 213–216, 148) to also include Stutthof and Treblinka in later guidebooks (Bousfield and Salter, 2006: 217–218; 162–163).

The replacement of Góra Kalwaria by Treblinka is indicative of a broader shift in the guidebooks across the 1990s and 2000s from directing visitors to where Jews once lived to where they had been murdered (Bousfield and Salter, 2005: 21). In part, these shifts within the guidebook reflected the rise of Holocaust tourism, but they also meshed with a broader ‘mainstreaming’ of guidebooks like *The Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet* in the 2000s as these companies were bought out by larger multinational publishers: something more significant than the change of one of the authors, specifically given Salter’s writing of critical sections that included Warsaw and Krakow (Iaquinto, 2011; Salter and McLachlan, 1993: iv). In this context, alongside being directed to Holocaust sites, visitors were sent to a smaller number of former Jewish sites that had been the focus of renovation, with the Kazimierz district in Krakow assuming particular importance (Bousfield and Salter, 2005: 21, 417–425). For the broader mass readership of these guides that were becoming increasingly mainstream, Kazimierz made sense because it had emerged as the central site of the re-making of Polish Jewish

heritage from the 1990s onwards (Lehrer, 2013). Although Kazimierz became particularly important as the prime site of ‘virtually Jewish’ space in Poland, it was not the only place where former Jewish buildings were being renovated (Gruber, 2002). This was happening elsewhere in Poland, with the Jewish buildings in Góra Kalwaria undergoing renovation and becoming a more common stop on more niche Polish-Jewish tourist itineraries (Gruber, 2007: 25). With renovation, these sites were no longer neglected places to be discovered.

The 1990s was a particular historical context. Not only were former Jewish sites largely in a state of neglect, but a guidebook like *The Rough Guide* was in a pre-mainstreaming state of independence. Both elements came together and for a moment Góra Kalwaria was, albeit briefly, inserted into the tourist itinerary. *The Rough Guide* authors – in particular Mark Salter – found a series of neglected former Jewish sites there that spoke powerfully of absence, and this became one preeminent destination in a wider memory tourism of Jewish absence that characterised this guide’s view of visiting Poland in the decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall. As I have suggested, tourists were directed to landscapes of absence precisely because there was little to see, aside from evidence of multiple landscapes of a lost people and their lost memory – a memory that guidebook authors and their backpacking readers sought to reawaken through acts of description and visitation. This memory tourism of absence fitted with a broader interest in absences in central and eastern Europe in the first decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall but was expanded and developed in particular striking ways in the pages of *The Rough Guide* across the 1990s. Not only does this point to the need for a broader range of categories to understand tourist practices that were not dark tourism, Holocaust tourism or Jewish heritage tourism, but perhaps even more importantly this signals that

tourist practices are always themselves historical and so can, and need to be, historicised.

Acknowledgements

I thank the anonymous reviewers of this article and the editors of the special edition of this journal for their incisive criticism and comments as well as the comments of audiences in Liverpool and Aarhus who responded to earlier versions of this paper.

References

- Baer, U., 2000. To give memory a place: Holocaust photography and the landscape tradition. *Representations*, 69, 38–62.
- Beech, J., 2000. The enigma of Holocaust sites as tourist attractions – the case of Buchenwald. *Managing Leisure*, 5 (1), 29–41.
- Bhattacharyya, D.P., 1997. Mediating India. An Analysis of a Guidebook. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24 (2), 371–389.
- Bousfield, J. and Salter, M., 2005. *The Rough Guide to Poland*. London: Rough Guides.
- Buzinde, C.N., 2010. Discursive constructions of the plantation past within a travel guidebook. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 5 (3), 219–235.
- Caruna, R., Crane, A., and Fitchett, J.A., 2008. Paradoxes of consumer independence: A critical discourse analysis of the independent traveller. *Marketing Theory*, 8 (3), 253–272.
- Cole, T., 2013a. Crematoria, barracks, gateway: Survivors' return visits to the memory landscapes of Auschwitz. *History and Memory*, 25 (2), 102–131.
- Cole, T., 2013b. (Re)visiting Auschwitz: (Re)encountering the Holocaust in its landscapes. *Cultural History*, 2 (2), 232–246.

- Cole, T., 2015. Holocaust tourism: The strange yet familiar/the familiar yet strange. *In*: D.I. Popescu and T. Schult, eds. *Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-Witness Era*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 93–106.
- Dydzinski, K., 1993. *Poland. A Travel Survival Kit*. London: Lonely Planet Publications.
- Gruber, R.E., 2002. *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gruber, R.E., 2007. *Jewish Heritage Travel. A Guide to Eastern Europe*. Washington, DC: National Geographic.
- Iaquinto, B.L., 2011. Fear of a Lonely Planet: Author anxieties and the mainstreaming of a guidebook. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 14 (8), 705–723.
- Kagan, J., 2001. *Poland's Jewish Landmarks. A Travel Guide*. New York: Hippocrene Books.
- Koshar, R., 1998. 'What ought to be seen': Tourists' guidebooks and national identities in modern Germany and Europe. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33 (3), 323–340.
- Kraft, S.E., 2007. Religion and spirituality in *Lonely Planet's* India. *Religion*, 37 (3): 230–242.
- Kugelmass, J., 1993. The rites of the tribe: The meaning of Poland for American Jewish tourists. *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 21, 395–453.
- Kugelmass, J., 1994. Why we go to Poland. Holocaust tourism as secular ritual. *In*: J.E. Young, ed. *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*. Berlin: Prestel, 174–183.
- Lehrer, E., 2010. Can there be a conciliatory heritage? *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16 (4-5), 269–288.

- Lehrer, E., 2013. *Jewish Poland Revisited. Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places*.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lennon, J. and Foley, M., 2000. *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*.
London: Continuum.
- Lisle, D., 2008. Humanitarian Travels: Ethical Communication in Lonely Planet Guidebooks. *Review of International Studies*, 34 (S1), 155–172.
- Lozanski, K., 2010. Independent travel: Colonialism, liberalism and the self. *Critical Sociology*, 37 (4), 465–482.
- MacCannell, D., 1976. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. London: Macmillan.
- McGregor, A., 2000. Dynamic texts and tourist gaze. Death, bones and buffalo. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27 (1), 27–50.
- Nelson, V., 2012. The construction of Slovenia as a European tourism destination in guidebooks. *Geoforum*, 43, 1099–1107.
- Peel, V. and Sørensen, A., 2016. *Exploring the Use and Impact of Travel Guidebooks*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Pittaway, M., 2003. Dealing with Dictatorship: Socialism and the Sites of Memory in Contemporary Hungary. In: C. Emsley, ed. *War, Culture and Memory*. Milton Keynes: The Open University, 269–308.
- Pollock, G., 2003. Holocaust tourism: Being there, looking back and the ethics of spatial memory. In: D. Crouch and N. Lübbren, eds. *Visual Culture and Tourism*. Oxford: Berg, 175–189.
- Reynolds, D.P., 2018. *Postcards from Auschwitz. Holocaust Tourism and the Meaning of Remembrance*. New York University Press.

- Salter, M. and McLachlan, G., 1991. *Poland. The Rough Guide*. London: Rough Guides.
- Salter, M. and McLachlan, G., 1993. *Poland. The Rough Guide*. London: Rough Guides.
- Salter, M. and McLachlan, G., 1996. *Poland. The Rough Guide*. London: Rough Guides.
- Salter, M. and McLachlan, G., 1999. *Poland. The Rough Guide*. London: Rough Guides.
- Schlör, J., 2006. 'It has to go away, but at the same time it has to be kept': The Berlin Wall and the Making of an Urban Icon. *Urban History*, 33 (1), 85–105.
- Sharpley, R., 2005. Travels to the edge of darkness: Towards a typology of dark tourism. In: C. Ryan, S. Page & M. Aicken, eds. *Taking Tourism to the Limits*. London: Elsevier, 220–231.
- Siegenthaler, P., 2002. Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japanese Guidebooks. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29 (4), 111–137.
- Tegelberg, M., 2010. Hidden sights. Tourism, representation and Lonely Planet Cambodia. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13 (5), 491–509.
- Therkelsen, A. and Sorensen, A., 2005. Reading the tourist guidebook: Tourists' ways of reading and relating to guidebooks. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 16 (1), 48–60.
- Towner, J., 1996. *An Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World 1540–1940*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Urry, J., 1990. *The Tourist Gaze*. London: Sage.
- Young, J.E., 1993. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Zillinger, M. 2006. The importance of guidebooks for the choice of tourist sites: A study of German tourists in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 6(3), 229–247.